

Message Text

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ORIGIN PRS-01

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 CCO-00 /017 R

DRAFTED BY S/PRS:JHTRATTNER:AVW

APPROVED BY S/PRS:JHTRATTNER

S/S - APSHANKLE

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P 110015Z DEC 76 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 301215 TOSEC 320208

FOR FUNSETH FROM S/PRS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT:SHIMON PERES INTERVIEW, NBC-TV "TODAY" SHOW,

DECEMBER 10, 1976

NO. 18

BROKAW: ONCE AGAIN IN THE ME THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF TALK ABOUT PEACE, ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF A ME CONFERENCE IN GENEVA AND ABOUT THE REORGANIZATION OF PLO. SHIMON PERES IS THE ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER, AND HE IS HERE THIS MORNING TO TALK WITH US ABOUT WHAT MAY BE HAPPENING IN HIS PART OF THE WORLD.

MR. PERES, AS YOU KNOW, THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF TALK, COMING BOTH FROM SADAT AND FROM OTHER ARAB LEADERS ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR A GENEVA CONFERENCE. YOU HAVE HAD IN YOUR COUNTRY DISCUSSION AS WELL. ARE YOU ENCOURAGED BY THE PROSPECTS, AND DO YOU THINK THERE IS ANY TIME THAT WE WILL KNOW, OR WHEN THERE MAY BE A GENEVA CONFERENCE?

PERES: I BELIEVE REAL PROBLEM ABOUT GENEVA CONFERENCE IS RIGHT PREPARATION, BECAUSE IF WE SHALL MEET WITHOUT HAVING GROUNDS READY FOR, WE MAY HAVE A SORT OF A CEREMONIAL DIVORCE THAT EVERYBODY WILL REGRET.

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BROKAW: AS YOU KNOW, THE ARABS ARE TALKING ABOUT AN ALL-ARAB DELEGATION OF WHICH PLO WOULD BE A PART. WOULD THAT BE ACCEPTABLE TO YOUR COUNTRY?

PERES: I WOULD BE PATIENT, I THINK, TO AWAIT THE RESOLUTION, BECAUSE IF THE ARABS WILL HAVE ITS OWN DELEGATION, THIS MEANS THAT THERE IS ACTUALLY AN ARAB OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY, WHICH WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH MANY OF THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES, LIKE FOR EXAMPLE, THE REFUGEES. AND I'M NOT ALTOGETHER CERTAIN THAT THEY REALLY CAN ACHIEVE IT.

BROKAW: AND WHAT ABOUT THE IDEA OF THE PLO FORMING A GOVT IN EXILE? COULD YOU DEAL WITH THAT KIND OF A GOVT?

PERES: NO, SIR, BECAUSE THE CHOICE IS BETWEEN THREE POSSIBLE ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTING THE PALESTINIANS: ONE IS THE JORDANIAN GOVT. THE 650,000 PEOPLE WHO LIVE ON THE WEST BANK ARE ALL HOLDERS OF JORDANIAN PASSPORTS, AND TO BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE NONE OF THEM WILL GIVE IT UP. (INAUDIBLE) WAS MASTER OF THE WEST BANK FOR RATHER A LONG TIME. THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE ARE THE WEST BANKERS THEMSELVES WITH AN ELECTED LEADERSHIP, AND I DO BELIEVE WITH A GROWING AMBITION TO DECIDE ON THEIR OWN DESTINY. THE PLO IS BY FAR THE MOST EXTREME, IRRESPONSIBLE, RUSSIAN ORIENTED GROUP, AND I DO NOT SEE ANY REASON WHY WE SHOULD PREFER THEM.

BROKAW: LET'S SAY THAT ALL THE PREPARATIONS ARE MADE FOR A GENEVA CONFERENCE, THAT IT IS WORKED OUT FOR PLO PARTICIPATION IN WHATEVER FASHION -- PERHAPS AS A MEMBER OF AN ALL-ARAB GROUP -- AND YOU GET TO GENEVA. WHAT IS IT THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE, A ONE-TIME ALL-ARAB-ISRAELI SETTLEMENT OR A CONTINUATION OF WHAT WE HAVE SEEN IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD -- A STEP-BY-STEP SETTLEMENT?

PERES: I WOULD CERTAINLY PREFER A ONE-TIME OVERALL SETTLEMENT, BUT I'M VERY MUCH IN DOUBT IF THIS CAN BE DONE, WHERE EXPERIENCE -- AND DR. KISSINGER WAS DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM FOR QUITE A LONG TIME -- IS ALSO ANOTHER OPINION THAT MAY BE A STEP-BY-STEP, ISSUE-AFTER-ISSUE, UNCLASSIFIED

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COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY APPROACH WILL REALLY ENABLE US TO MOVE IN A MORE PROMISING WAY.

BROKAW: SO YOU COULD POSSIBLY SEE GENEVA AS THE BEGINNING OF A SERIES OF CONFERENCES, WORKING OUT THE FIRST STEP AT GENEVA, AND THEN PERHAPS RETURNING THERE TO WORK OUT THE NEXT STEP?

PERES: I WOULD PREFER TO SEE GENEVA AS A CROWN TO CONCLUDE NEGOTIATIONS AS IT HAPPENED, SAY A YEAR AGO. BUT I WOULD NOT ALSO OBJECT TO SEE IN GENEVA A COMMENCEMENT OF NEGOTIATIONS. BUT IF WE ARE TALKING SERIOUSLY, THE NEGOTIATION ITSELF IN MY JUDGMENT SHOULD BE DONE BY QUIET, RESPONSIBLE APPROACHES AND NEGOTIATIONS SO WE SHALL REALLY ACHIEVE AN AGREEMENT.

BROKAW: AS YOU KNOW VERY WELL, SECRETARY KISSINGER HAS BEEN ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN ALL THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT ARE GOING ON IN THE MIDDLE EAST. WE ARE ABOUT TO HAVE A CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATION. DO YOU FORESEE THE NEW SECSTATE, CYRUS VANCE, PICKING UP WHERE SECRETARY KISSINGER LEFT OFF AS THE PRINCIPAL MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES?

PERES: FROM WHATEVER I HEAR, I BELIEVE THAT MR. VANCE IS QUALIFIED TO DO IT. THEN I'M CONVINCED THAT AMERICA TODAY ENJOYS THE HIGHEST POINT OF TRUST BY PRACTICALLY MOST OF THE SIDES, AND I WOULD CERTAINLY LIKE TO SEE THE U.S. PLAYING AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. I BELIEVE TODAY THAT'S THE ONLY PROBABLE WAY TO NEGOTIATE. AND I THINK THE ADMINISTRATION WILL BE ABLE TO DO IT.

BROKAW: YOU GO BACK TO ISRAEL ON MONDAY. IT STRIKES ME AS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT YOU WILL RETURN WITHOUT HAVING SEEN THE NEW INCOMING SECSTATE OR SOME IMPORTANT MEMBER OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION -- PERHAPS EVEN ON AN UNOFFICIAL BASIS. IS THAT FAIR SPECULATION ON MY PART?

PERES: A FAIR SPECULATION, BUT I UNDERSTAND THAT IN U.S. YOU HAVE JUST ONE GOVT, AND MY REFERENCES CAN ONLY BE TO THE EXISTING ADMINISTRATION.

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BROKAW: SO YOU WILL BE SEEING SECRETARY KISSINGER FOR SURE ON SUNDAY (SIC) IN WASHINGTON?

PERES: YES, I SHALL BE SEEING SECRETARY KISSINGER AND SECRETARY RUMSFELD --

BROKAW: AND THE FAIR SPECULATION, THAT IS, ON AN UNOFFICIAL BASIS THAT YOU WOULD SEE THE NEW SECSTATE AS WELL, CYRUS VANCE?

PERES: WELL, I WOULDN'T LIKE TO COMMENT ON THAT.

BROKAW: I THINK THAT THE AMERICAN PUBLIC NEEDS FROM TIME TO TIME A LESSON IN GEOGRAPHY ON THE ME, THAT WE ALL DO. IF YOU GO TO GENEVA THERE IS GOING TO BE A GREAT DEAL OF

TALK ABOUT WHAT TERRITORY YOU ARE PREPARED TO GIVE UP.
LET'S BEGIN WITH THE TERRITORY THAT YOU ARE NOT PREPARED
TO GIVE UP. WHAT TERRITORY THAT YOU NOW HOLD IS

NON-NEGOTIABLE AS FAR AS YOU ARE CONCERNED?

PERES: WELL, FOR SURE, JERUSALEM, THAT WAS REUNITED AFTER
THE WAR, AND WE ARE NOT GOING TO TURN IT OVER AGAIN INTO
A DIVIDED CITY --

BROKAW: WHICH IS RIGHT DOWN IN HERE --

PERES: YES, RIGHT. THEN THE PROBLEM IS, WHEN IT COMES TO
THE WEST BANK, WHO WILL GOVERN IT? THIS IS A TINY LITTLE
AREA.

BROKAW: ALONG IN HERE.

PERES: YES. THIS IS A TINY LITTLE AREA, ALL TOLD PROBABLY
2,000 TO 2,500 SQUARE MILES. WE WOULDN'T LIKE TO CREATE
A SITUATION WHEREBY THE RUSSIANS WILL COME IN AT THE
GATES OF JERUSALEM, (INAUDIBLE).

BROKAW: YOU SEE THAT AS A REAL POSSIBILITY, THAT IF THE
PLO WERE TO TAKE THAT OVER AND MAKE THAT A PALESTINE STATE
OF SOME KIND ON THE WEST BANK, THAT THE SOVIET INFLUENCE
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WOULD BE TOO HEAVY THERE.

PERES: VERY MUCH SO. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE WEST
BANK WAS UNDER THE GOVT OF THE JORDANIAN GOVT IN BETWEEN
'48 TO '67, AND WHILE BEING UNDER ARAB CONTROL THERE,
THEY HAD NEVER CREATED A PALESTINIAN STATE. SO, THERE IS
NOTHING NEW ABOUT THAT.

BROKAW: AND YOU WOULD NOT GIVE UP THE GOLAN HGIHTS, WHICH
IS TO THE NORTH OF SYRIA, NEXT TO SYRIA?

PERES: THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, SOME PARTS OF IT, ARE NEGOTIABLE
IF THE SYRIANS WOULD REALLY BE READY TO ACHIEVE AN AGREE-
MENT.

BROKAW: A BUFFER ZONE OF SOME KIND.

PERES: I THINK THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO ARRANGE IT. THERE
IS ALSO ROOM FOR INGENUITY, AS IT WAS DONE IN THE SINAI
PENINSULA, FOR EXAMPLE, BY INTRODUCING AN AMERICAN WATCH
STATION, WHICH SERVES ALL PARTIES RATHER WELL.

BROKAW: MR. PERES, WE HAVE A REPORT THAT YOUR COUNTRY IS
SELLING 24 FIGHTER PLANES TO PERU FOR \$5 MILLION A PIECE,
AND THAT AUSTRIA ALSO MAY BE A CUSTOMER. IS ISRAEL
ABOUT TO BECOME AN ARMS MERCHANT?

PERES: NO, SIR. UNFORTUNATELY, ISRAEL IS A SMALL, TINY
DEMOCRACY THAT NEEDS WEAPONS TO PROTECT HER LIFE. THERE
ARE NO AMERICAN TROOPS, LIKE IN EUROPE, TO DEFEND OUR-
SELVES, AND IF WE CAN PRODUCE OUR OWN ARMS AND NOT TO
BECOME A BURDEN UPON ANYONE ELSE, CERTAINLY WE'D LIKE TO
DO IT.

BROKAW: SHIMON PERES, THE ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER,
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE301215
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JHTRATTNER:AVW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760457-0383
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761251/aaaabrka.tel
Line Count: 239
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN PRS
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: schwenja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 JUN 2004 by hattaycs>; APPROVED <16 AUG 2004 by schwenja>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SHIMON PERES INTERVIEW, NBC-TV "TODAY" SHOW, DECEMBER 10, 1976 NO. 18
TAGS: SOPN, IS, NBC-TV, (PERES, SHIMON)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006